How Johnson Said No To Peace in Honolulu

The Price of Crushing the Czechs

The Czechs stood alone in 1938 against German imperialism. Today they stand alone against Russian imperialism. Moscow shows itself again, as in Hungary, as ready as Washington is in Vietnam to crush rebellious nationalisms in its assumed sphere of influence. The bureaucratic Soviet regime fears that if it allows freedom of expression in Prague it must ultimately grant it in Warsaw, Kiev and Moscow. The price of crushing the Czechs is to further the moral decline of the world communist movement, and to build up a resentment in the Soviet bloc which will some day make change more violent than it might have been. The ideal of socialism is being destroyed by its association with tyranny over the mind. Marx's successors are ruining Marx's legacy.

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The Farce of Self-Determination in South Vietnam

I

The guns of Cleveland warned again that racial war is coming at home unless we turn our full energies toward its prevention. But Johnson and the ruling establishments in both parties are still intent on wasting our substance in the search for an impossible victory in Vietnam. On this Johnson, Nixon, Humphrey and Rockefeller agree. While the talks in Paris have served to lull the country into the notion that peace is on the way, the Honolulu talks were designed firmly and finally to continue the war unless the other side surrenders. Even Johnson's long-suffering Senate Democratic leader, Mansfield the Meek, said on WMAL (ABC) July 28, of the Honolulu talks, "It appears to me that we are locked in." He added, "We haven't got the give, the flexibility which should be ours." We haven't got it because Johnson and the Pentagon don't want it.

A Slap In The Face of The Other Side

The Honolulu communique was a deliberate slap in the face at the other side on two crucial questions, one immediate, the other long range. The immediate question is how to evaluate the lull in the fighting which brought the number of Americans killed in combat during the week ended July 20 to the lowest point this year. "Ever since last May," Donald Kirk reported from Saigon to the *Washington Star* July 17, American units have searched for enemy troop concentrations and encountered only minor sporadic contact." The rocket attacks on Saigon have ceased. Prince Souvanna Phouma, head of the Laotian government, told a press conference in Paris July 26, that the U.S. should accept this lull as "a sign of good-will" from Hanoi, and clear the way for substantive peace talks by stopping the bombing of North Vietnam altogether. When U.S. combat deaths are down from the war's all-time peak of 562 in the week ended May 11 to the 1968 low of 157 killed in the week ended July 20, a lot of American mothers and fathers would be glad to take this decline in deaths as a sign of that reciprocity we have been demanding.

The American military have been doing their best to hide this lull from view. The fighting is down but the mimeograph machines are hot with press releases announcing that new enemy offensives are—or must be—on the way. It looks as if the Pentagon, like Peking, just won't be satisfied until General Giap heats up the war again. The Honolulu communique contains a back-handed admission of a lull in the fighting and in the bombardment of Saigon but declines to entertain the idea that this might represent an olive branch from the enemy. This is the language of the communique:

They [Johnson and Thieu] agreed that the pattern of military activity on the other side continues to indicate renewed action at some time in the next two months. Military factors—enemy regrouping and effective allied spoiling actions—appear to account for the drop in the level of fighting over the last two to three weeks, including the lull in the indiscriminate attacks on the civilian population in Saigon.

(*Continued on Page Two*)

For An American Negro Congress

One way to handle the problems of a multi-racial society is by allowing racial or cultural minorities to have their own regional legislatures with considerable autonomy in internal affairs. Scottish and Welsh nationalists have made such proposals in Great Britain; a similar system exists in French-speaking Quebec. While far from satisfactory, this is more responsive to minority grievance than simple rule by the dominant racial majority. A similar solution needs to be applied here to the black community. Though it is not regionally concentrated, this community should be recognized as a nation within a nation and given its own representative institutions within the national framework. An American Negro Congress would give the black revolt organized focus and a mechanism for peaceful change, instead of letting a few extreme Nationalists polarize the racial struggle as they almost did in Cleveland. This would give whites a chance to see just what the majority of blacks want and to reach a peaceful accommodation. It would avoid the fantasy of separatism while adjusting to realities. If, as we believe, the primary demand would be control of police, businesses and schools in black areas, such a representative body could negotiate a pattern of nationwide change, with whatever help from the Federal government was needed to bring it about.

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Practicing Diplomacy or Buffoonery?

The communique and Harriman's script at Paris must make the other side's negotiators feel that we are so determined to continue the war that we are prepared to ignore any peaceful signals from the other side. They must think it sheer buffoonery for Harriman in the midst of the lull in the fighting and in the bombardment of Saigon to ask them as he did on July 17 what they would do if we stopped the bombing, "slow the pace of the war or heighten the level of your aggression?" Harriman claimed that he had had "no answer whatsoever." (AP from Paris in *Washington Star* July 17). The Paris talks began May 13. Since then U.S. combat deaths per week have dropped by 72 percent, despite a sharp increase in our search-and-destroy operations which increase casualties. The other side may wonder why this is not an answer. Their chief negotiator, Xuan Thuy, complained to David Schoenbrun in an ABC interview July 16,

> **Although their have been no rocket attacks on Saigon for several weeks, the Americans maintain their offensives and send out their bombers on ever more devastating missions in the Saigon region. Furthermore, Americans have greatly increased tonnage and sorties of destructive air raids on North Vietnam since the [Paris] talks began.**

While the enemy has *de*-escalated, we have escalated. If Johnson wants to avoid a successful negotiation, that is the way to do it.

II

The longer range question on which the other side must regard the Honolulu communique as an affront, another piece of clownish hypocrisy, is that of self-determination for South Vietnam. The Honolulu communique closed the door on any political compromise and did so in the name of self-determination. It said the U.S. would not "impose a coalition government or any other form of government on the people of South Vietnam." It said they had the right to choose their own government. This is double talk, double think and double dealing. We have been imposing governments on South Vietnam ever since we put Diem in office. Saigon hasn't had a government in 14 years which would not have collapsed without American crutches. It hasn't had a single government which dared to hold a really free election.

The joint communique praised the new Cabinet of Tran Van Huong and implied that it was more democratic. The day that communique was published Donald Kirk reported from Saigon to the *Washington Star* (July 21) that while this new government "appears to have adopted a more liberal stance" than its predecessor it "has actually clamped down harder on dissent in the past month or so than in the previous seven months of Thieu's presidency." Dramatic proof of this was supplied four days later when a military tribunal in less than three hours sentenced Truong Dinh Dzu, the peace candidate who came in second in the presidential elections, to five years at hard labor. "Our men in Vietnam," Johnson told the Governors Conference in Cincinnati after his return from Honolulu, "struggle to protect the things we believe in." When Dzu pleaded that he had only been expressing his ideas "on how to put an end to the war", the judge of the military court told him, "As a citizen of the Republic of Vietnam, you have no right to dissent on the policy of the Government of the Republic of South Vietnam" (*Washington Post*, July 28). Is this what we believe in? Is this what our men are dying for?

Bertrand Russell Appeals for The Czechs

"Sir—For the third time in three decades Czechoslovakia is on the brink. In 1938 it was Munich and German occupation. In 1948 it was the Prague coup and Stalinist rule. In 1968 Czechoslovakia is pushing through a process of reform within a socialist framework, but in line with her own democratic traditions, quietly and unprovocatively. Yet once more she is facing interference and even threats of intervention.

"The Czechs are no longer 'a far-away people of whom we know nothing'. Their situation is being watched with sympathy and anxiety by the public in this and other countries; it has also aroused strong feelings in many communist parties. The outcome of the present will affect the prospects of European, if not world, political development for years to come.

"Czechoslovakia is not theatening anyone. She has a right to self-determination, yet she freely admitted military forces of the Warsaw Pact countries to prove her loyalty. Should her sovereignty be destroyed again, this would gravely damage any prospect of a genuine detente with the Soviet Union. All men of good will must hope that this does not happen."

—Letter to The Times *(London) July 24 by Bertrand Russell, Kingsley Amis, Max Beloff, Benjamin Britten, Brigid Brophy, Julian Huxley, Paul Johnson, Lord Soper, Stephen Spender, Philip Toynbee, and Arnold Wesker.*

A Constructive Potential for Peace the U.S. Consistently Ignores or Disparages

"The establishment of the Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces of Vietnam represents a serious effort by Hanoi and the NLF to open a political dialogue. The Alliance was created on April 20-21 at a meeting near Saigon. The individual leaders are professionals, business men, intellectuals and one clergyman. All are city dwellers. With one exception, they are not known to have previous involvement with the NLF. Nevertheless we assume that creation of the Alliance was stimulated by the NLF and North Vietnam. The program closely approximates that of the Front. The Alliance and the NLF have publicly stated that they support each other.

"Rather than attempt to measure the degree of control by the Front and Hanoi, we believe it is more illuminating to analyze the motivation behind the establishment of the alliance. The NLF is largely a Communist led, nationalist peasant movement. The Alliance, in theory at least, provides the first political framework for bourgeois nationalists who want to operate independently of the NLF in opposition to a U.S. military presence in South Vietnam. Knowledgeable non-Communists with whom we spoke believe the basic role of the Alliance is to help open a political dialogue in South Vietnam which can eventually bridge the chasm now separating the Front from the Saigon government.

"The impression is enhanced by the Hanoi Foreign Ministry's statement of July 18 which omitted the oft-repeated demand that the future of South Vietnam 'must' be settled 'in accordance with' the program of the NLF, further evidence that the Alliance is being given greater importance as a means of preparing for a meaningful exchange with non-Communist South Vietnamese."

—Slightly abridged from a statement July 22 by Sanford Gottlieb of SANE and Rodney Shaw of the United Methodist Church on their return from talks in Prague and Paris with spokesmen for Hanoi and the NLF.

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One Man One Vote—And One Opinion?

Johnson's genius for flim-flam was evident in the Honolulu communique's pledge of one man, one vote, as if this were a question of reapportionment in our rural South. But the communique went on to indicate that the one man could only get that one vote if he proved he had the one opinion favored by the Saigon regime. Thieu offered and Johnson endorsed the cute idea that anybody could participate in politics who agreed "to renounce force and to abide by the Constitution of Vietnam." But this is the Constitution under which Dzu has just been sentenced without right of appeal to five years for talking peace. This is the rigged Constitution which excludes from political life anyone the Saigon regime regards as pro-Communist or pro-neutralist. This is not an offer of reconciliation but a demand for surrender.

At the Paris session which followed the Honolulu talks, Harriman asked the other side if it was sincere about a memorandum (see box bottom of p. 2) it issued which omitted Point 3 of Hanoi's famous Four Points and spoke instead of "the South Vietnamese people's right of self-determination in the settlement of their internal affairs." The other side must have wondered about his sincerity when he followed this up by urging them to deal with the Saigon government. Point 3, which U.S. propaganda has consistently distorted, merely demanded that the people of South Vietnam be given the right of self-determination "in accordance with the program of the National Liberation Front." This program has always called for free elections. As early as its first program in 1962, the NLF program said:

"Put into force democratic liberties: liberty for all parties to organize and to act, liberty for all newspapers and books to appear, liberty for all religious confessions to practice their faith, liberty for all political organizations to present candidates for the National Assembly and other elected bodies . . . election of a new National Assembly and the democratic framing of a new Constitution." *

None of the regimes we have supported in Saigon, from Diem through the successor military juntas, has ever allowed full freedom of election and discussion in South Vietnam. Diem, like the present regime, also had elections, a Constitution, and an Assembly, all of it rigged for minority control. To give Saigon the controlling voice in the peace talks is to deny self-determination, not to affirm it.

* From text on p. 192, Georges Chaffard: Indochina, dix ans d'independence. Calmann-Levy, Paris, 1964.

Humphrey's Hawkish Record On Vietnam

Washington—Despite suggestions to the contrary, Vice President Humphrey has made it clear he has no intention of reversing his support for the Vietnam war. He is so deeply committed he would find it impossible to change even if he wished to do so. Humphrey's record on Vietnam back to his earliest utterances on the subject in 1950, shows him to be a consistent advocate of strong action there. He warned time and again that the "loss" of Vietnam would be a "tragedy" and "unthinkable." In 1955 he rebuked Secretary of State Dulles for seeming to weaken U.S. support of the Diem government. In 1962 Humphrey suggested that South Vietnam might wish to take the battle into North Vietnam, and give the enemy "a taste of their own medicine."

—Don Oberdorfer of the Knight Newspapers in the Miami Herald *June 19. This survey is the best we have seen and goes on to spell out the details.*

III

U.S. propaganda has done its best to hide these realities lest the American people realize that we are giving an unrepresentative Asian oligarchy control not only of South Vietnam's future but of our own. "American officials here," said a dispatch from Saigon to the *New York Times* July 25, "are contending that the government is probably the most representative in South Vietnamese history." The paper's headlines over the story proclaimed "a more vital regime", as if to atone with a little hoopla for its usually more astringent reporting. But the further one read the more the illusions evaporated. "Many of them quickly concede, however," Roberts wrote of these optimistic U.S. officials, "that it is the middle class that is represented broadly—and not the peasantry." This concession is quite a confession. The latest edition of the Army's area handbook for South Vietnam (April, 1967, p. 248) says, "nearly 80 percent of the South Vietnamese are peasants."

This government is so far to the right and so pro-war it even has our people in Saigon worried. "The hawkishness of the Assembly," said this same forlorn attempt by the *New York Times* to be a little optimistic, "is disquieting to Americans here." The dispatch asks, "Why is the Assembly so militant in a nation in which many people—and particularly those in rural areas [i.e. the 80% who are peasants]—appear to be neutrals who are willing to settle for anything that will bring them peace? Why isn't this reflected in the Assembly?"

(*Continued on Page Four*)

Upholding The Right to Conscientious Objection Against The Vietnamese War

"Protection of conscience demands that the churches should give spiritual care and support not only to those serving in armed forces but also to those who, especially in the light of the nature of modern warfare, object to participation in particular wars they feel bound in conscience to oppose . . ."

—Human Rights statement of the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, New York Times, *July 17*

"There is clearly a right to what has been called 'selective conscientious objection' and, if we take Luther's Christianity seriously, an obligation upon the Christian convinced of the injustice of a war to refuse to participate in it . . . It is, therefore, urgently incumbent upon national Lutheran bodies, and all Christian churches which adhere to the 'just war' concept, to demand of the temporal authorities the same recognition of the rights of the 'selective conscientious objector' that they accord to adherents of the Christian pacifist tradtion. . . ."

—Statement of the Task Force on Peace and War of the Washington area Lutheran Social Services. Reprinted in Cong. Record, *July 17, S 8797.*

"I was proud to serve in the Navy in the South Pacific at Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and Indochina, because the purpose and necesssity of our struggle was clear. Today, however, I question the avowed purposes of the war in Vietnam, and I question a system of conscription which forces young men to contradict their own moral commitment."

—Sen. Mark Hatfield (R.-Ore.), *on inserting into the July 17* Congressional Record *the texts of statements from a total of 322 student and youth leaders declaring that they "cannot in good conscience serve in the military so long as the war in Vietnam continues."*

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Never Forget That Thieu Is Johnson's Puppet, Not the Other Way Round

(*Continued from Page Three*)

One reason for the unrepresentative mood and character of the Saigon legislature, the dispatch admitted, is that "almost no peasants or working class candidates filed for office, apparently considering the government to be the province of the educated middle class, and in South Vietnam the middle class tends to be militantly anti-Communist and conservative." In South Vietnam "the most active political factions tend to be those that are militantly anti-Communist such as Roman Catholic blocs." So "Catholics, for example," the dispatch goes on, "hold half of the Senate seats although they make up about 10 percent of the nation's population." This is not even representative of South Vietnam's Catholics. The Army's own handbook shows that half the Catholics are Northern refugees who tend to be bitter-enders under Father Quyhn while the native South Vietnamese belong to the moderate section led by the pacific Archbishop of Saigon.

Generals Who Practice Free Enterprise

The South Vietnamese army leadership is as unrepresentative as the regime it keeps in power. We recommend the scathing description of it in Chapter 3 of Lt. Col. Wm. R. Corson's new book *The Betrayal*. This was written by a Marine commander, just retired after 25 years of combat service in three wars, last in Vietnam, and with wide knowledge of Asia. Col. Corson says that after 20 years of war the ARVN leadership "are in no hurry to pursue the enemy, for from their point of view the goal is not to defeat the enemy, but to maintain their position, and enhance their personal fortunes." There are few ARVN commanders near U.S. installations, he goes on, who "do not either run or control the highly lucrative laundry, garbage-artifact store and roadside 'boom-boom' [pidgin English for brothel] concessions." This corrupt officer corps "is derived solely from the wealthier social class because each officer is required to possess a French-style second baccalaureate (college degree). This requirement effectively excludes men from peasant or working class families who are not allowed to attend high school."

Such is the army we supply, the regime we support, in South Vietnam in the name of "self-determination." This is the regime to which Johnson has given a virtual veto over our peace negotiations. Until Thieu agrees to peace, we must keep fighting his battle and that of the oligarchy he represents. When Johnson locked the door on peace in Honolulu, these are the men to whom he gave the key. But let us never forget that he gave them the key because he wanted an excuse to block a settlement in Paris and to continue the war. If South Vietnam's people had self-determination, they would vote for peace. That is why we keep these puppets in power. *July 28*

McCarthy on the Paris Talks

"[A Democratic platform on Vietnam that I could support] would probably have to follow pretty much what I have been proposing—that we negotiate a new government in South Vietnam . . . It would be a coalition with the National Liberation Front, proceed to de-escalate the war as a condition to that settlement, and we insist that the South Vietnamese either accept it or carry on the war themselves. . . . If you're not going to negotiate that kind of settlement, I don't see what you have to negotiate unless it's surrender."

—Sen. McCarthy on Metromedia TV, July 21.

"Elie ABEL (NBC News): Are you saying, Senator, that the Administration, the President, do not want meaningful negotiations?

"Sen. McCARTHY: I don't know what they want, really. I don't think that negotiations can come to very much unless they are willing to accept a new government . . .

"ABEL: But is a new government in South Vietnam something that we and North Vietnam ought to negotiate about?

"McCARTHY: Yes, I think so.

"ABEL: Over the heads of the South Vietnamese?

"McCARTHY: Well, I don't quite know if it's over their heads. I think that we're in constant communication with them, but if you accept what both Thieu and Ky have said, that they're more or less going to dictate what the government is, then I think we have to . . ."

—Sen. McCarthy on the Today *show, July 24.*

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